

ARE YOU GOING TO REPRESENT YOURSELF IN YOUR FAMILY LAW CASE?

Most family law cases involve serious and, often times, complex legal issues. You should consider consulting with a family law attorney before you make the choice to represent yourself. Many family law attorneys charge only a nominal amount or nothing at all for an initial consultation.

If you elect to represent yourself, Butte County has two programs in place to assist self-represented persons in family law cases. The programs are the Family Law Facilitator's Office and the Self-Help Assistance and Referral Program (SHARP), each is operated under the supervision of an attorney. Neither program gives legal advice as one could obtain from a privately retained attorney.

These programs provide services to both parties, or if there is a joinder, to all parties in the case. Neither program represents a party in the case. No attorney-client relationship is created between a party and the program attorney as a result of any information or services provided to a party by the program. The emphasis of each program is to provide legal information and education, not legal strategy and advice. The services of both programs are available to all self-represented parties as there is no income qualification prerequisite. The staff of these programs will provide information about procedure, substantive law and choices litigants may have, thereby allowing people to make informed decisions about their case.

The Family Law Facilitator's Office provides several services that include the following:

1. Providing educational materials to parents concerning the court process of establishing parentage and establishing, modifying and enforcing child and spousal support;
2. Distributing necessary court forms and voluntary declarations of paternity, assistance in completing the forms;
3. Preparing support schedules based upon statutory guidelines;
4. Providing referrals to the local child support agency, family court services and other community resources that provide services for parents and children; and
5. Providing assistance on child support issues.

The SHARP Program provides several services in the family law area that are not offered by the Family Law Facilitator's Office. These services include the following:

1. Providing assistance to the parties in finalizing their divorce (obtaining a final judgment);
2. Providing assistance to parties in initiating and responding to Orders to Show Cause and Notice of Motion for issues other than child and spousal support (How to get interim orders for control of property, use of vehicles, assignment of responsibility for the payment of debts, etc.);
3. Providing assistance to parties in initiating and responding to Change of Venue Motions;
4. Providing information to parties on how to proceed with summary dissolution (How to obtain an uncontested divorce);
5. Providing assistance to parties in initiating and responding to domestic violence restraining orders, and
6. Providing assistance to all parties in the preparation of all documents involved in guardianships.
7. Providing assistance to parties in initiating and responding to injunctions prohibiting harassment (civil harassment).

The Family Law Facilitator's Office and the SHARP Program are located at:

1931 Arlin Rhine Drive, Oroville, California 95965

(530) 532-7004 Family Law Facilitator

(530) 532-7015 SHARP

Hours are Monday through Thursday, 9 am to 4 pm, and Friday 9 am to noon.